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August 13, 1998

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RECEIVED

AUG 13 1998

Magalie Roman Salas, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

**Re: Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service,
CC Docket No. 96-45;
Nomination for Membership on Rural Task Force**

Dear Ms. Salas:

On behalf of Western Wireless Corporation ("Western Wireless"), I am writing to respectfully request that an additional member be added to the Federal-State Joint Board's Rural Task Force ("RTF"), and to nominate Gene DeJordy, Executive Director for Regulatory Affairs, Western Wireless, to that position.

We realize that the period for nominating members for the RTF has closed and that a list of members has been compiled. ^{1/} But none of the current members of the RTF represents the interests of wireless carriers that seek to provide supported services in rural areas in competition with incumbent local exchange carriers. Including a representative of Western Wireless would fill that void and enhance the economic, social, geographic, and competitive diversity of the RTF to ensure that the membership is well-balanced.

^{1/} See Public Notice FCC 97J-1, *Federal-State Joint Board Announces the Creation of a Rural Task Force; Solicits Nominations for Membership on Rural Task Force*, in CC Docket 96-45 (released September 17, 1997); *Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service Announces Rural Task Force Members*, Public Notice, FCC 98J-1 (rel. July 1, 1998). Western Wireless respectfully requests that Mr. DeJordy be placed on the RTF in Category 7, Other Non-ILEC Participants.

Western Wireless, which provides cellular and broadband PCS service in 22 states, is actively participating in universal service proceedings before the FCC and a number of state commissions. Western Wireless operates in many rural and high cost areas, and is seriously interested in providing universal service and in helping to realize the goals of Section 254 of the Act. In Reese River Valley and Antelope Valley, Nevada, for example, Western Wireless already provides basic local exchange and enhanced services using wireless local loops to approximately 50 residential consumers who would not otherwise have access to telecommunications services, pursuant to a stipulation reached with Nevada Bell and the Nevada Public Service Commission.

In addition, Western Wireless is sponsoring and preparing to submit for the record in this proceeding a forward-looking wireless cost model that would complement efforts already underway and make a significant contribution to the Joint Board's and the Commission's efforts to analyze high-cost support issues. Because the RTF's primary mission is to study the establishment of a forward-looking economic cost mechanism for rural carriers, the RTF can benefit from Western Wireless's significant efforts in this area over the past few months, as well as its extensive experience in serving rural and high cost areas for many years.

Moreover, Mr. DeJordy is particularly well-suited to serve on the RTF given his expertise in this area and his understanding of the engineering, economics, and policy concerns in this area. He will have sufficient resources to devote to the project, including adequate funding for travel and other expenses. A brief biography of Mr. DeJordy is enclosed.

If you have any questions about this matter, please contact me. Thank you very much.

Respectfully submitted,



Michele C. Farquhar
Counsel for Western Wireless Corporation

Enclosure

cc: Astrid Carlson
Service List

Biography of Gene DeJordy

Gene DeJordy is an attorney and Executive Director of Regulatory Affairs for Western Wireless Corporation. In this capacity, Mr. DeJordy is responsible for all federal and state regulatory and legislative affairs for the Company, and he positions the Company to take advantage of opportunities presented by the changing legal and regulatory environment. Mr. DeJordy also is responsible for negotiating and implementing new interconnection agreements with the local exchange carriers in Western Wireless' service area, which includes more than 20 western states.

Through Mr. DeJordy's efforts, Western Wireless became the first CMRS provider in the United States to establish in state commission arbitration proceedings cost-based, reciprocal compensation arrangements with local exchange carriers under the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Additionally, Mr. DeJordy is responsible for coordinating Western Wireless' entry into the competitive local exchange and long distance markets, including obtaining state certifications, if applicable, negotiating interconnection agreements, and addressing local competition issues. He has also been leading Western Wireless' efforts to provide universal service in many high cost and rural areas.

Prior to working for Western Wireless, Mr. DeJordy was an attorney with the Washington, D.C. law firm of Swidler and Berlin, Chartered, where his practice focused on federal and state regulatory issues affecting competitive local service providers, including wireless carriers. Before working at Swidler and Berlin, Mr. DeJordy was an attorney with the Federal Communications Commission in the Common Carrier Bureau. Mr. DeJordy holds a Juris Doctorate degree from Catholic University of America, a Master of Science degree in Telecommunications Policy from George Washington University, and a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Maryland.

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